

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 SP-02 STR-01

TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 SS-15 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 USIA-06 TAR-01 /076 W  
----- 123519

P R 191517Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9421

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 04235

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, EGEN, UK, EEC

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDS CONTINUED EC MEMBERSHIP

REF: LONDON 4107

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER WILSON MARCH 18 TOLD HOUSE  
OF COMMONS THAT GOVERNMENT HAD CONSIDERED RENEGOTIATED  
TERMS AND DECIDED TO RECOMMEND CONTINUED BRITISH MEMBER-  
SHIP. HE DECLINED TO DISCLOSE CABINET LINE-UP ON QUES-  
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TION, BUT WE UNDERSTAND THERE WAS 16 TO 7 SPLIT. TRADE

SECRETARY SHORE SUBSEQUENTLY ISSUED FORMAL ANTI-MARKET STATEMENT WHICH WAS SIGNED BY FOUR OTHER CABINET MINISTERS. OVER ONE HUNDRED PARLIAMENTARY LABOR PARTY (PLP) ANTI-MARKETEERS, INCLUDING A NUMBER OF JUNIOR MINISTERS, ALSO PRESENTED MOTION AGAINST GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDATION. DESPITE SPLIT IN PLP, TENOR OF PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS FOLLOWING WILSON STATEMENT INDICATES GOVERNMENT CAN COUNT ON CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL BENCHES TO SUPPORT RECOMMENDATION. LABOR PARTY NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) MEETING AND SPECIAL PARTY CONFERENCE, AS WELL AS REFERENDUM ITSELF, LIE AHEAD AND PROMISE TO BE TROUBLESOME. END SUMMARY.

2. SPEAKING TO PACKED HOUSE OF COMMONS, PRIME MINISTER WILSON MARCH 18 ANNOUNCED THAT GOVERNMENT HAD CONSIDERED RENEGOTIATED TERMS AND DECIDED TO RECOMMEND CONTINUED UK MEMBERSHIP. HIS STATEMENT (COMPLETE TEXT FORWARDED BY POUCH) REVIEWED ORIGINAL RENEGOTIATION GOALS SET FORTH IN PARTY MANIFESTO AND ACTUAL ACHIEVEMENTS. HE CONCLUDED THAT MANIFESTO AIMS HAD BEEN "SUBSTANTIALLY, THOUGH NOT COMPLETELY, ACHIEVED". ALTHOUGH DECLINING TO IDENTIFY DISSENTING CABINET MEMBERS, WILSON PROMISED TO INFORM COMMONS OF FINAL CABINET LINE-UP FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL CABINET DISCUSSIONS. MEDIA, HOWEVER, QUICKLY ESTABLISHED THAT VOTE WAS 16 TO 7 (SHORE, FOOT, CASTLE, BENN, SILKIN, ERIC VARLEY AND WILLIAM ROSS AGAINST). LEADING CABINET ANTI-MARKETEERS WERE LOYALLY SEATED ON GOVERNMENT FRONT BENCH DURING WILSON'S STATEMENT.

3. PARLIAMENTARY RESPONSES TO WILSON STATEMENT FROM BOTH SIDES OF AISLE WERE CYNICAL, BUT GENERALLY FAVORABLE DESPITE CLEAR SPLIT IN PLP. WILSON, RESPONDING TO OPPOSITION QUESTIONS, REITERATED GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO ABIDE BY REFERENDUM RESULT AND REJECTED SUGGESTION THAT NEGATIVE VOTE WOULD BE REPUDIATION OF GOVERNMENT NECESSITATING GENERAL ELECTION.

4. EC OPPOSITION IN LABOR PARTY LOST LITTLE TIME IN MAKING ITS CASE. TRADE SECRETARY SHORE ISSUED FORMAL STATEMENT, WHICH WAS SIGNED BY FOOT, CASTLE, BENN, CONFIDENTIAL

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PRS-01 USIA-06 TAR-01 /076 W  
----- 123245

P R 191517Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9422

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 04235

SILKIN AND SOME JUNIOR MINISTERS, ANNOUNCING THEIR INTENTION TO CAMPAIGN ACTIVELY AGAINST GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDATION. SOVEREIGNTY WAS PRINCIPAL ARGUMENT ADVANCED IN THIS STATEMENT. OVER ONE HUNDRED BACKBENCHERS, INCLUDING A LARGE NUMBER OF JUNIOR MINISTERS, ALSO SIGNED A MOTION OPPOSING THE GOVERNMENT'S RECOMMENDATION. LATTER WERE REPORTEDLY UPSET BY "CODE OF CONDUCT" (REFTEL) FOR REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN WHICH PROHIBITED THEIR APPEARANCE ON RADIO OR TV YESTERDAY AND REQUIRES THAT THEY "REGISTER" WITH PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE BEFORE ACTIVELY CAM-  
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PAIGNING AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT POSITION.

5. REGARDING TRANSPORT HOUSE, WILSON SAID GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDATION WILL BE CONSIDERED BY NEC MARCH 26 AND CONFIRMED THAT NEC IS ALSO CONSIDERING MOVING UP DATE OF SPECIAL PARTY CONFERENCE (REFTEL).

6. COMMENT: PARTY SOURCES HAVE CONFIRMED REPORTED 16 TO 7 CABINET SPLIT. WILSON'S FAILURE TO WIN OVER VARLEY -- WHO OWES HIS POLITICAL ADVANCEMENT TO WILSON -- MUST BE REGARDED AS A SETBACK FOR THE PRO-MARKET CAUSE. SIMILARLY, REPORTS THAT 118 LABOR MPS, INCLUDING 19 JUNIOR MINISTERS, ARE PREPARED TO GO ON RECORD IN OPPOSITION TO THE CABINET RECOMMENDATION, ARE DISCOURAGING. THEY DIMINISH ALREADY SLIM PROSPECTS THAT WILSON MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PREVAIL UPON THE NEC AND THE SPECIAL PARTY CONFERENCE TO REMAIN AT LEAST NEUTRAL.

7. DESPITE DIFFERENCES IN LABOR PARTY, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT COMMONS WILL ENDORSE THE GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDATION OVERWHELMINGLY, PERHAPS BY MORE THAN 2 TO 1. REFERENDUM OUTCOME, HOWEVER, IS FAR FROM CERTAIN, DESPITE FAVORABLE INDICATIONS OF RECENT OPINION POLLS.

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## Message Attributes

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